PUDUKKOTTAI STATE
NATIONAL WAR FRONT BUREAU

BULLETIN] **MARCH 6, 1943** **[No. 136**

LECTURE CXXXVI.

ALL-INDIA RED CROSS.

HER EXCELLENCY THE MARCHIONESS OF LINLITHGOW'S APPEAL.

I want to ask you to-night to work, as you have never worked before and to give more than you have ever given to make this week a record of noble achievement.

Somtimes you may ask yourselves "What does the Red Cross do with all their money ?" Put shortly, the two main objects are: (1) to benefit the sick, wounded and convalescent of the services, and, secondly, the provision of comforts for Indian prisoners of war. A very moderate estimate of the cost of supplies for war hospital beds for 1943 is 84 lakhs of rupees, and parcels for Indian prisoners of war will cost approximately 70 lakhs.

The Indian Comforts Fund in London pack and send food parcels on our behalf, for which we pay and recently 20,000 parcels every week, each weighing 10 pounds, have gone out. Many side lines include the Red Cross postal and cable message service and the tracing of men who are missing.

Unless the public supplies the money, the efforts of the Red Cross will have to be curtailed. The people of India will not allow this to happen—you cannot allow this to happen. If you had been round the military hospitals, Indian and British, in Calcutta, in Assam, and in Bombay, as I have during the last month, you would realise how much your thought and interest mean to the men lying there. I myself and many of you have loved ones as prisoners of war. Have you even pictured to yourselves the excitement with which their parcels are received? These parcels mean much more to them than the actual contents. They mean that those at home are thinking of them. They conjure up pictures of their families and of happy days in their own country. A comfort to them during these years behind barbed wire, deprived of freedom in everything but spirit. This no one can take from them and we can make heir lot more bearable.

It is a fine thought that in the midst of this world upheaval, where brutality and fear, misery and starvation follow in the wake of the Axis invaders, the Red Cross stands forth as something above all strife and all bitterness, unassailable.

Here in India the Joint War Organisation of the Indian Red Cross and the St. John Ambulance Association has provided comforts and supplies for the sick, wounded and convalescent of the Indian forces wherever they may be. Food, clothing and comforts are provided for all Indian prisoners of war in Europe and in the Far East. In 1942, Rs. 60 lakhs were spent and in 1943, as I have said before, Rs. 150 lakhs will be needed owing to the vast increase in the force and the higher cost of stores and supplies.

I appeal to you with all earnestness to-night to show your gratitude for all that the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force have done and are doing, day in and day out, often without food and without sleep, battling their way through virgin jungle, through dangerous seas, through barren desert, and through storms, so that we may be spared the horrors of invasion. Try and visualise the powers of endurance, the courage and the humour which are required to get them through and let us say to ourselves that anything we can do and any sacrifice that we can make, are insignificant in comparison with what they are doing for us.

Give generously now and contribute regularly for the duration of the war, thus ensuring the steady income which alone will enable the Indian Red Cross and St. John Ambulance to continue the great humanitarian work which only they can do.

WEEKLY WAR SUMMARY.

27—2—43 to 5—3—43.

Russia.—The sudden arrival of an early thaw and the need to consolidate the immense territories taken in the last three months have slowed down the Russian advance in the southern front and helped the Germans to stiffen their resistance in this sector. The southern front is now divided into 3 clearly defined areas :—(1) the *Northern Ukraine* where the Russians continue to advance west of KHARKOV and KURSK towards the still distant line of the Dnieper ; (2) the *Donetz basin* where the Germans are launching constant counter-attacks around KRAMATORSKAYA in the north-western corner of the Donbas, in the vital area of the parallelogram of railways forming the heart of the industrial region of the Donetz and (3) *the area west of Rostov*, where German reistance is being offered on the Mius River line at TAGANROG.

Futher north, in the central sector, General Timoshenko, launching a fresh offensive, has captured DEMYANSK east of Lake Ilmen and north-west of RZHEV, clearing an area of 900 squire miles ; and now the big news has come of the fall of RZHEV itself—that big hedge-hog fortress which the

Germans had held since the summer of 1941. The Germans say that it was evacuated in order to shorten the line and according to plan. But the Russian account reveals that it was first by-passed and then surrounded.

The Red Army has also taken LGOV and DMITRI-LGOVSK west of KURSK.

Tunisia.–Rommel, as has been remarked, stuck his head out too far and has now got his nose bloodied. He has been driven out of KASSERINA (Feb. 27), FERIANA (28), and SBEITLA (March 1), and is falling back on FAID his original position.

On Feb. 26, the lull in the northern sector was broken by a series of attacks by the enemy along a 50 mile area of DJABELMANSOUR, BOU ARADA and MADJEB EL BAB. They are continuing and are being repulsed.

The 8th Army has started an offensive and pierced the defences of the Mareth Line at several places. Forward petrols of the Army have linked up with the U. S. reconnaissance forces which have pushed down towards GAFSA, after taking SBEITLA.

North Pacific.—KISKA in the ALEUTIAN Islands was raided twice.

S. W. Pacific.—The outstanding victory of the week is that of *the battle of the Bismarck Sea* ending in the almost complete destruction of a Japanese convoy which attempted to run reinforcements to NEW GUINEA through what is known as the 'Suicide Alley'—the 30 miles strait between NEW BRITAIN and NEW GUINEA. The convoy consisted of 10 warships and a dozen transports, all of which have been destroyed by Allied bomber and fighter action. Besides, the Japanese have lost 55 aircraft and 15,000 men.

The bombing of Japanese bases continued. The chief targets were ESPIRITUSANTO Islands, CHOISEU Islands, REKATA Bay, VILLA MUNDA, MUBO, KOLOMBANGA Islands, and the SHORTLAND area.

China.—Chinese troops have recaptured SUIHISI in the LINCHOW Peninsula. The Japanese are withdrawing in the HUPEH, KWANGTUNG and KIANGSI Provinces. Chinese forces in western YUNNAN are resisting the Japanese thrust from LISHUI and CHENGKANG. LISHUI is on the west bank of the Salween River north of the BURMA Road and CHENGKANG is south of the BURMA Road.

Chinese forces raided the outskirts of KINHWA, the 'Bomb Tokyo' province of CHEKIANG.

Burma.—The chief event is a successful attack on February 21–22 carried by British fighting patrols on the enemy-occupied village of MYEBON, about 60 miles south-east of AKYAB. The troops landed from vessels of the Royal Indian Navy's Coastal Forces and remained in possession of the place for about 5 hours. All enemy buildings were burnt, the jetty was blown up and a 100 foot river-steamer was destroyed. After carrying out their mission the troops returned safely, accompanied by several Indians there, who asked to be taken back rather than live under the galling Japanese yoke.

Air-raids were made on the following places:—

Feb. 21.—RANGOON area.

Feb. 23.—MYAUNGBWE, PANKTAWA, RAMREE Island (ARAKAN Coast), AKYAB, PONNAGYUN, PROME, MYITKYINA and GOKTEIK VIADUCT.

Feb. 24.—PINHAW.

Feb. 24.—THAZI, a village near RATHEDAUNG and water transport on the Kaladan river.

Feb. 25.—HUKAWNG valley, MYITGINA bridge, MYOHAUNG and MYITTHA valley.

Feb. 27.—RANGOON and WAINGMAW.

India.—On Feb. 25, a strong formation of Japanese bombers attacked an American air base in ASSAM. A few bombs fell on one of the bases but did no damage. Out of 46 enemy aircraft that came only 9 returned, the rest were destroyed.

ALLIED AIR RAIDS.

21—2—43 (Sunday).

EUROPE.

NIGHT:—

The port of BREMEN (Germany).

NORTH AFRICA and the MEDITERRANEAN.

Enemy tanks and vehicles south of SBIBA.

Railway yards at GAFSA.

An enemy convoy south of SICILY.

RUSSIA.

Air combats and grounded aircraft all over the entire Russian Front.

FAR EAST.

Jap airfields at KAHILA and BALLALE (Buin-area).

Jap installations in the MUBO area.

Shipping at AMBOINA.

Road junctions at TOUNGUP Road (Burma).

PROME and **SINBAIK** (Burma)

Fort DUFFERIN and **MYINGYAN** (Burma).

22—2—43. (Monday).

EUROPE.

NIGHT:—

Laying mines in enemy coastal waters.

NORTH AFRICA and the MEDITERRANEAN.

An enemy convoy off the coast of TUNISIA.

The docks at BIZERTA.

RUSSIA.

Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the Russian Front.

FAR EAST.

Airfields at KAHILI and BALLALE (Buin-Faisi area).

Airfield at MALAHANG.

Villages in the MUBO and LAE areas.

The airfield and harbour at RABAUL (N. Britain).

The airfield at GASMATA (N. Britain).

Enemy objectives at AKYAB and PAUKTAWAGYI (both in Burma).

The Mingaldon airfield at RANGOON.

KISKA (Aleutians).

MUNDA (N. Georgia).

VILA (Kolambangara).

23—2—43 (Tuesday).

EUROPE.

No information available.

NORTH AFRICA and the MEDITERRANEAN.

Enemy columns withdrawing in central TUNISIA.

Motor vehicles in the battle area.

Roads behind the enemy lines.

RUSSIA.

Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the entire battle area.

FAR EAST.

Shipping and shore installations at RABAUL (N. Britain).

Airfield at CAPE GLOUCESTER.

Enemy occupied places in LAE and MUBO areas.

KOEPANG (Timor).

VILA (Kolambangara).

MUNDA (N. Georgia).

Jap villages of MYAUNGBWE and PAUKTAWA (Burma).

A coastal steamer near RAMREE Island (Burma).

AKYAB, PONNAGYUN and **PROME** (all in Burma)

24—2—43 (Wednesday).

EUROPE.

NIGHT:—

The Naval base at WILHELMSHAVEN.

Military objectives in western GERMANY.

The Naval bases at NAPLES and COTRONE (both in Italy).

NORTH AFRICA and the MEDITERRANEAN.

Enemy motor transport, troops and road and rail communications behind the enemy lines in TUNISIA.

The airfield at TUNIS.

Targets at SBEITLA and GAFSA.

GABES and the **MARETH Line.**

RUSSIA.

Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the Russian Front.

FAR EAST.

The airfields at LAE and SALAMAUA.

The airfields at RABAUL.

The railway junction at THAZI.

A village near RATHEDAUNG.

Water transport on the KALADAN River.

25—2—43 (Thursday).

EUROPE (9 Allied planes missing).

NIGHT:—

NUREMBERG (Germany).
Military objectives in western GERMANY.
Laying mines in enemy waters.

NORTH AFRICA and the MEDITERRANEAN.

Enemy vehicles and motor transport in the TUNISIAN battlefield.
The docks at BIZERTA.
Railways near GABES.

RUSSIA.

Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the Russian Front

FAR EAST.

VILA (Kolambangara Island).
Enemy positions at KAHILI and FAISI (Shortlands).
The harbour and airfield at RABAUL.
Objectives at THAZI railway station (Burma).
RATHEDAUNG and AKYAB (Burma).
MYITGNE bridge (Burma).
Railway trucks in MYITTHA valley (Burma).

26—2—43 (Friday).

EUROPE.

DAY:—

The docks at WILHELMSHAVEN; and DUNKIRK.
Axis ships off the French coast.

NIGHT:—

The submarine base at COLOGNE.

NORTH AFRICA and the MEDITERRANEAN.

Railway locomotive near TOZEUR.
GABES.
The Mareth Line.
Enemy landing grounds behind the enemy's lines.

RUSSIA.

Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the entire Russian Front.

FAR EAST.

The airfield and harbour at WEWAK.
Powell Point (N. Britain).
The airfield at GASMATA (N. Britain).
Various parts of Burma ranging from MAWLU to RAMREE Island.
Jap occupied villages in the AKYAB area.

27—2—43 (Saturday).

EUROPE.

DAY:—

The docks and shipping at DUNKIRK.
An airfield at MAUPERTA.
The docks at BREST.
An airfield in BELGIUM.

NIGHT:—

Objectives in Western GERMANY.
Laying mines in enemy waters.

NORTH AFRICA and the MEDITERRANEAN.

Motor transport and vehicles in the battle area.
MARETH Line.
The docks at BIZERTA.
Railway targets in Southern SICILY.

RUSSIA.

(Plane losses for the week 20—2—43 to 27—2—43: Russia 87; Axis 168.)

Air combats and grounded aircraft along the entire Russian Front.

FAR EAST.

The airfields at LAE and SALAMAUA (N. Guinea).
The harbour and shipping at RABAUL (N. Britain).
MYOHAUNG and RATHEDAUNG (Burma).
Jap occupied airfields in central Burma.

ENEMY AIR RAIDS.

22—2—43 (Monday).

BRITAIN.

No air raid anywhere in BRITAIN.

NORTH AFRICA.

THALA (Tunisia).

RUSSIA.

Russian forward positions in the DONETZ basin.

FAR EAST.

BUNA and MILNE Bay area (N. Guinea).

23—2—43 (Tuesday).

BRITAIN.

No information available.

NORTH AFRICA.

Forward positions of the 1st army in Northern TUNISIA.

FAR EAST.

Port MORESBY (N. Guinea).

24—2—43 (Wednesday).

BRITAIN.

No air activity.

NORTH AFRICA.

The Allied base at ALGIERS.

FAR EAST.

BUNA area.

25—2—43 (Thursday).

BRITAIN.

No air raid anywhere in BRITAIN.

NORTH AFRICA.

TRIPOLI.

RUSSIA.

KRASNOARMEYSK.

FAR EAST.

An airfield in ASSAM (India).

26—2—43 (Friday).

BRITAIN.

No information available.

NORTH AFRICA.

Forward positions of the 8th army in TUNISIA.

RUSSIA.

KRAMATASKAYA.

FAR EAST.

The airfield at GUADALCANAR (Solomons).

27—2—43 (Saturday).

BRITAIN.

South-east coast of BRITAIN.

NORTH AFRICA.

TRIPOLI.

FAR EAST.

Allied position in the RATHEDAUNG area.

28—2—43 (Sunday).

BRITAIN.

No air raid anywhere in BRITAIN.

NORTH AFRICA.

Br. forward position in Northern TUNISIA.

RUSSIA.

Air battles over the DONBAS region.

FAR EAST.

No information.

SIDE LIGHTS.

THE APPEAL OF THE RED CROSS. We publish on another page Lady Linlithgow's broadcast of Sunday last, inaugurating the All-India Red Cross week and join in the appeal for funds, especially at the present moment when as the Marchioness pointed out this humanitarian work is in danger of having to be curtailed, if public help be not forthcoming. 'The people of India,' Her Excellency observed, 'will not allow this to happen—cannot allow this to happen' and we join in the prayer. In 1942, Rs. 60 lakhs was spent on this noble work and now owing to the vast increase of the military arms and the higher cost of stores and supplies Rs. 150 lakhs will be needed in 1943. At the beginning of the war the Indian Red Cross spent out of its capital resources but if this should continue the basic funds would soon vanish and all the health and welfare service would cease. We understand that even if the Indian Red Cross Society sold all its investments it cannot meet half of its 1943 expenditure.

The Indian Red Cross, now working separately from the larger organisation of the United-Nations Red Cross, to prevant overlapping, is responsible for the sick, the wounded and the convalescent of both British and Indian soldiers in INDIA itself and in IRAQ and IRAN. In AFRICA, ADEN, the MIDDLE EAST and CEYLON it works for the Indian forces only. So far as hospitals go the army departments make the necassary provision. But in curing a wounded soldier there is more to do than stitch up his wound; amenities are also needed and here the Red Cross steps in. Here are some of the amenities which the Red Cross supplies—invalid chairs, books, music, hot-water bottles, invalid foods and recreation. The Red Cross tries to ameliorate the condition of the prisoners of war also. Although these unfortunate soldiers must according to International Law be fed and housed by the captors the Red Cross sends them what comforts it can to make life bearable—food parcels, clothing, toilet necessaries, to mention only a few. Such is the Red Cross Mission. These presents mean much more to the prisoners than their actual contents—they bring with them thoughts of home and family and are a token of the gratitude of the Indian Nation for all that the soldiers have done and are doing, in jungle, field and flood and in the air, to save their country.

'Red Cross', as the Marchioness said, 'stands forth above all strife and all bitterness, unassailed and unassailable.'

To give generously to this fund is patriotism, humanity and service.

v v v v v v v v v v v v v

OUR WAR BUDGET For the first time since the outbreak of the war INDIA's Central Budget has begun to work out at a deficit. This year the deficit is Rs. 94·66 crores and next year

(1943—44) the deficit will be Rs. 60·29 crores. It is proposed to meet a third of next year's deficit by levying an excise duty on tobacco and Vanaspati and the remaining two-thirds by borrowing.

The reasons for the deficit are not far to seek. As in the military so in the economic sense war has come closer to INDIA and economic conditions have consequently become assimilated more closely to the world's conditions in general. During the first two years of the war, and in spite of the war INDIA's economic conditions were favourable. Though some overseas markets were lost others were newly gained. INDIA's external debt was repaid, employment improved, earnings rose, and with them, agricultural income and the buying power of the ryot.

But in the last twelve months a change came over the Indian scene, clouding the general prosperity. The loss of BURMA and MALAYA lost us some of our food supplies, placed a strain on communications, interfered with our production and threw CEYLON, on our hands, with the necessity to feed her. Meanwhile civil disturbances, difficulties of transport and the greed and stupidity of hoarders and profiteers added to the difficulties.

But it is wrong to exaggerate the Indian problem as though it were peculiar to India. Our burden is like others'. Thankful that we have been spared the burden for the first two years of the war let us now cheerfully take over our share in the world's difficulties—'All in all', as Sir Jeremy Raisman, the Finance Member at the Centre, reminded in his Budget speech on February 27, 'When we compare our economic position with that of other belligerent powers we can face the difficulty of the present not with complacency, for which certainly there is no room, but with the conviction that our problems are no worse, and indeed, in many respects, easier than those of other peoples in a world at war'.

'This is not to say, however,' he took care to add, 'that any of us can afford to evade the problem or to allow what may not be a serious problem to-day to develop into one for lack of timely and vigilant action.'

'That being so, I deprecate', he observed, 'loose talk and wild exaggeration in these matters; for they are the parents of panic-buying and these in their turn benefit only the profiteer and the speculator. There is the most urgent need for economy in personal expenditure at the present time, not only because lavish expenditure will raise the level of prices but because of the need for conserving supplies of scarce materials for war purposes'.

The alternative to private hoarding, he concluded, an alternative which will moreover assist the war effort powerfully and reduce the war risks—an alternative which is generally adopted in all belligerent countries is investment of private savings in Government loans. It has many advantages. Besides securing a free flow of money for Government's use for the better prosecution of the war, besides reducing the tendencies to hoard, the money

will still be safe for use after the war. The sheet anchor in the present emergency is therefore borrowing on the part of the Government and economy, saving and investment in Government bonds on the part of the people.

v v v v v v v v v v v v v

THE CONSUMER HOARDER, said Major General Wood, Additional Secretary, Food Department, speaking in the Central Assembly on February 22 on Food supply, is even more dangerous than the profiteer, because "due to his panic-buying the working margins and the working balances disappear from the retail shops. It is his fear and his nervousness that gives the opportunity to the unscrupulous traders. It is that part of the consuming community that have laid in stocks for months ahead that is as much answerable for our present malady as any". This factor is too little realised and too little emphasized," he added, and continued, "Those participating in this anti-social activity merely have to pay more for the goods for which at least they can find the money. But what of those who have no mony to build up domestic hoards? What of those who can only buy their needs from miserable pittance they earn from day to day? What of the poor? Every consumer hoarder must be brought to realise that it is mainly he who starts the panic and largely he who can stop the panic. He is playing his part in grinding the faces of the poor".

Too true. Let us hope that this revealing statement will reinforce correct public opinion and lead to correct action.

v v v v v v v v v v v v v

EUROPE'S FANATIC. There is nothing new in Hitler's Proclamation broadcast on February 24, as part of the Nazi Party's birthday celebrations, but we refer to it as providing an indication of the state of mind of the Fuehrer. For the third time in three weeks Hitler failed to face an audience—even the microphone. The excuse of calls in the Eastern Front has been too often repeated to be convincing. It would appear rather that Hitler is now both ashamed and afraid of facing the German public. STALINGRAD, ROSTOV, KHARKOV and now RZEV have taken the shine very much from him. He has no more excuses to explain the catastrophes. His future is blank as his past has proved dismal. He fears the Saboteurs at home. Vainly he threatens to mobilise the man-power of the occupied and satellite countries. Madly he vituperates against the Jew and the plutocrat. The symptoms are those of frenzy, of a failing mind or, to use Hitler's own expression, fanaticism. In the Proclamation, addressing the German nation, he says, 'you have learned this fanaticism from me. Accept now the assurance that the same fanaticism still inspires me to-day with the same intensity and that it will never leave me as long as I live'.

The condition is indeed hopeless.

THE BOLSHEVIK BOGEY, which Hitler in his frenzy often witnesses in his visions, like the ghost of Caesar may bring terror to his mind and weakness to his arm but it will deceive nobody. It is late in the day for Hitler to pretend to lead a crusade against Bolshevism. RUSSIA, the world has realised, is a land of rare patriots, the best defenders of western democracy. The King presents a Sword of Honour to RUSSIA and Stalin accepts it—sure emblem of the world's coalition—Bolshevik and non-Bolshevik, for a joint victory over the common enemy of human freedom.

On February 21 Mr. Anthony Eden laid the Bolshevik Bogey at rest with these remarks :—

'This bogey had been used to frighten EUROPE while AUSTRIA was seized, CZECHOSLOVAKIA was swallowed, and POLAND was threatened. It was a mockery to contemplate Hitler as the saviour of European civilisation—a person who had ravaged WARSAW, ROTTERDAM, BELGRADE and COVENTRY and acountless number of Russian cities. It is plain that the doctrine for which Hitler stood was the doctrine of herrenvolk—the doctrine that all EUROPE must slave and starve for the German overlord.'

v v v v v v v v v v v v v

GERMAN JUGGLERY. The German claim to have inflicted on RUSSIA a total loss of 18,200,000 men, since the war began in killed, wounded and captured is too fantastic and gargantuan even for Goebbels. It was impossible, for one thing for RUSSIA to have won its recent successes if the losses had been so enormous. The fact is, in addition to wilful exaggeration, the total has been increased by including all the Russians, Latvians, Estonians, and Lithuanians brought into GERMANY for slave labour. It also includes hundreds of thousands of civilians—men, women and children wiped out in the Russian towns and villages, of which KHARKOV supplies the latest example.

v v v v v v v v v v v v v

KHARKOV'S TALE OF HORROR. *Reuter's* Special Correspondent, writing on February 27, stated that by way of introducing the 'New Order' in KHARKOV Russian civilians in hundreds were killed and hung from balconies for a mile along the main street. At least 100 important buildings were gutted. Before evacuating the city German soldiers went through the streets and shot able-bodied men. At least 110,000 men and women were dragged off to GERMANY for labour. 1,500 Jews were seized and machine-gunned.

v v v v v v v v v v v v v

NAZI TERROR IN EUROPE. On the same day as REUTER gave this information the Inter-Allied Information Committee published the following figures of killed in 9 occupied countries, we give the totals only :—POLAND: 2,500,000; BELGIUM: 1,482; CZECHOSLOVAKIA: 2,463 not including LIDICE and LEZAKY exterminated, and 100,000 externed; FRANCE: 24,000 excluding 1,41,000 interned ; GREECE

2

and CRETE: 18,000; LUXEMBURG: 29, HOLLAND: 200 excluding 8,000 interned; NORWAY: 140 excluding 7,000 interned, YUGOSLAVIA: 744,000 excluding 46,000 interned.

v v v v v v v v v v v v v

GOEBBELS' GONG. As part of effective propaganda of the U-boat performance Dr. Goebbels has opened a new item in his daily news bulletin in English, which is to sound a gong, a stroke for each Allied ship supposed to have been sunk in the previous 24 hours. Between February 1 to February 23 the gong sounded on 12 days altogether claiming, by 116 strokes, the sinking of as many vessels—32 warships and 84 merchantmen.

On February 2, for instance, the gong sounded 6 times and the announcer added they represented the sinking of one British submarine, 2 American battleships and 3 American cruisers. It is true that a British submarine did not return on that date but the American losses were only one cruiser and one destroyer and they were due to Japanese action, not to the German U-boat.

Again on February 11, the gong sounded 20 times—while the U-boat had not scored a single victim for the day.

v v v v v v v v v v v v v

THE REPLY TO THE U-BOAT is the construction of new ships in which the UNITED STATES, GREAT BRITAIN and CANADA are now competitively engaged. They are all building to capacity. The production is astronomical. AMERICA which delivered 138 ships in February promises to build 5 ships a day from May. Rear-Admiral Emory Land, Chairman of the U. S. Maritime Commission, has stated that ship-building facilities have been standardised to produce 20,000,000 tons or between 1,600 and 1,800 ships yearly.

v v v v v v v v v v v v v

THE WAR IN RUSSIA. The chief feature of the week has been the steady advance of the Russians against stiffening German resistance. The thaw which has descended on the southern front may aid the Germans to hold the Russians a while on the Donetz, but further north, where the thaw has not set in, the Russian advance towards DNEIPROPETROVSK and KIEV seems inevitable. North of KHARKOV the Russians are closing in on Orel. RZHEV has fallen.

v v v v v v v v v v v v v

ROMMEL'S GAMBLE. Rommel who is now presumably in command of all the Axis forces attempted, during the week, in his usual gambling way, a dash against the Allied positions in TUNISIA, at a time when the 8th Army had not been reorganised for attack and the Americans held their positions lightly between GAFSA and KAIRWAN. By a sudden swoop he occupied SBEITLA, KASSERINE and FERIANA and moved to attack the Allied base at THALA and JEBESSA over the hills. It was

a daring stroke but it failed. General Anderson's counter-stroke has recovered the positions.

Montgomery's 8th Army has been massed in front of the Mareth Line waiting for the hour to attack.

v v v v v v v v v v v v v

KWANGEHOW BAY, on the eastern coast of LINCHOW Peninsula, with its two islands of TUNGHAI and NANCHOW inside the Bay is part of CHINA and until 2 weeks ago was a French concession. On February 23 JAPAN seized it on the ground that CHUNGKING was receiving supplies by this route. Simultaneously it was also declared that Vichy had returned the concession to the Nanking Government and also abrogated her extra-territorial rights here. The first wonder is that Vichy has not yet even recognised Nanking as a Government; the second wonder is that there is no mention of INDO-CHINA which hitherto exercised the rights and the third and strangest wonder of all is that for this gift NANKING has thanked not Vichy, as one would expect, but JAPAN. It would also appear that Vichy was informed of the Japanese seizure after the event and Vichy to save face gave her 'consent' under compulsion.

JAPANESE ARE INSINCERE AND FALSE.

Mr. Hundraj M. Parwani.

[Mr. Hundraj M. Parwani, a prominent Congressman of Sind, has just returned to India after an adventurous escape from the Japanese in East Asia.

During a year's stay under Japanese rule in Hongkong and elsewhere, he saw how the Japanese behaved towards subject peoples, especially Indians, and he admits that what he saw was an eye-opener to the Indians themselves.

Mr. Parwani, who arrived in Karachi only a few days ago, told the A.R.P. that he reached Hongkong in 1941 just before the Japanese attacked it. He was there at the time of its surrender. Before he went out to the Far East Mr. Parwani was Vice-President of Kotri Municipality, a member of the Sind Provincial Congress Executive Committee and of the Provincial Congress Parliamentary Board.]

Japan has been proclaiming to the world its friendliness to Asiatic races, its goodwill towards India and Indians, and its desire to free India from British rule without any motive or designs on India. Some of us here in India may be trusting Japanese propaganda. It is not unnatural. Anxious to free their country from foreign yoke, desperate, some of our young men may believe that Japan is the redeemer of the East Asiatic races.

I had opportunities, last year, of witnessing the treatment by the Japanese of Indian nationals in Hongkong, and in some other parts of East Asia, after their fall into Japanese hands. I also saw, with my own eyes, their treatment

of other Asiatic races in those territories. I can, therefore, speak of my own experience, intense suffering, and personal knowledge of the happenings there.

Japan is unpopular with the East Asiatic races to-day, as she never was before the Pacific war.

As one who had been closely associated with nationalist activities in India during many years, and as one who can speak from experience of the Japanese in East Asia I want to state that Japanese professions of friendliness to India are insincere and false, meant only to deceive India.

WILL BE WORSE.

Our condition to-day is, undoubtedly, not what it should be; therefore a desire for a change of masters will be deplorable. If our condition under Britain has been unsatisfactory, it will be a hundred times worse, in the event of a Japanese or Axis victory.

I have deemed it my duty, as a lifelong Congressman to apprise my countrymen of the real intentions of the Japanese and their evil designs on India. India, I believe, has her own contribution to make to world peace and re-construction, and she can do that effectively if she makes all the necessary sacrifices in the cause of world freedom. Let us not view this titanic struggle from the viewpoint of nationalism, India's freedom and greatness are linked with the world's freedom; therefore, victory of the United Nations will alone make India truly free and enable her to play her glorious part in the future reconstruction of the world.

WHERE WILL HITLER STOP?

FACTORS GOVERNING GERMAN WITHDRAWAL.

The Daily Telegraph.

There is nothing definite yet to indicate where Hitler hopes to stabilise the Russian front.

There are two factors which must govern the German strategy of withdrawal. First, the line must provide for the deepest possible outpost zone in the south in front of the vital Rumanian oilfields of Ploesti.

Second, the line must be shorter than that which the Germans hold at present, thus permitting an economy of force.

As to the first of these factors, it is estimated that the Germans' minimum requirements for full-scale mechanised war on the Russian front, together with such side issues as the campaign in Tunisia, are 11 million tons of oil per year.

Of this, they reckon to obtain 6 million tons from the Rumanian fields, 4 million from the home production of synthetic oil, balancing their budget as to the remaining one million by miscellaneous expedients such as the use of producer gas.

It is quite clear, therefore, that Hitler, now that his dreams of Caucasian oil have vanished, cannot afford to permit Russian bombers to be based any nearer to Ploesti than he can possibly avoid.

This conclusion immediately raises the question: Do the Germans intend to stay in the Crimea?

If they do, then the line which they must intend to hold is that from Melitopol to Zaporozhe which covers only the railway into and out of the Crimea. From Zaporozhe such a line might run along the Dnieper in front of Kiev and thence through the Pripet marshes to Minsk and Riga.

This would be a shortened line, very much shortened when reckoned in the saving of troops which the Germans would effect in the Pripet sector.

If the Germans cannot hold this line—and the Russian thrust towards the Dnieper bend at Dnepropetrovosk already seriously threatens it—then they could find even a shorter line from Odessa to Kiev and thence to Riga as before.

But the very big withdrawal to this line would involve either the evacuation of the Crimea or its complete isolation together with the establishment of Russian air bases within 350 miles of Ploesti.

We may be sure, therefore, that the Germans will hold the Melitopol line forward of the Crimea if it is humanly possible.

We may be equally sure that they have already prepared a line to which they may now withdraw.

This is a precaution which they do not neglect even at a moment of victory: witness their preparation of the Aisne line in 1914 when they were still advancing to the Marne.

UP AGAINST IT.

Britain was "up against it" in 1940. But the King and the Premier did not pack their bags and fly to Canada, as the German Radio repeatedly claimed they had done or were about to do. Many times since then Mr. Churchill has been the bearer of "hard and heavy tidings" for the nation. Not once has he shirked his duty.

Germany is "up against it" in 1943. The Fuehrer was due to speak to the German nation on January 30. He did not keep the appointment. Whether he was glowering over military maps in Bryansk or chewing the already badly bitten carpet in Berchtesgaden is of little consequence. The important fact is that this vain little man—who dearly loves to scream and beat his chest in the glare of arc lamps—was mute, at a time when the whole nation was yearning to hear courageous words which would fortify them in their hour of trial.

That was three weeks ago, when the stampede from Stalingrad had only just begun. Since then, the Red Army has thundered through Rostov, Kursk

and Kharkov to battlefields which had heard nothing but the stamp of German boots for two winters and a summer. The Soviet forces have reconquered an expanse of territory more than half the size of Germany.

Every day that passes is a day nearer the Anglo-American invasion of Europe. That event is awaited in Germany with anything but pleasurable expectancy. In an effort to turn German thoughts from such an unpleasant prospect, Dr. Goebbels has told his staff that, for every word they write about the German tanks they must write two about the German U-boats. Their theme must be: "German U-boats are sinking British and American ships at such a rate that the much-advertised offensive in the West will never materialise and Germany will be spared the ordeal of a two-front war."

Those Germans who are too old to belong to the Hitler Jugend may recall a similar statement, which was made in January 1917 by Admiral Kapelle, then Secretary to the Kaiser's Admiralty. Kapelle said: "Before the armies of America can be trained, the destruction of enemy shipping will have gone so far, there will simply be no more ships to take these troops to Europe."

That boast was made 22 months before the German High Seas Fleet sailed —under Allied orders—to surrender itself at Scapa Flow. In 1917 it took thrice the time to build an American 'Liberty ship' that it takes in 1943. The American emergency shipbuilding programme of the last war did not get into its stride until after the Armistice. By May 1943, American shipyards will be working at peak capacity with an output of five ships a day. Even in the past six months, when the American output of new ships averaged only three a day, it sufficed to replace all the Allied tonnage destroyed in the same period. The million-and-a-quarter tons built by the British Commonwealth in those six months represent a net increase in the merchant shipping muster of the United Nations.

The U-boats are a decided menace because, in Mr. Churchill's words "The losses we suffer at sea......prolong the war." But U-boats will not prevent the United Nations from pursuing, with energy and determination, the path they have chosen. The citizen armies will fight on until the soul-destroying tyrants of Berlin, Rome and Tokyo, successively or in unison (it matters not which), cry: "*Hold, Enough!*"

DRAINING THE *LUFTWAFFE'S* STRENGTH.

In the past four months the Axis has lost well over 2,000 aircraft in North Africa. The seriousness of the Allied threat in this area has had the effect of diverting 20 per cent of the German fighter strength to Tunisia. Two days ago (February 17) Patrick Lacey said in a B. B. C. news commentary: "We have reason to believe that less than half of the whole German air force—bombers, fighters and transport planes—is now in Russia".

Although large numbers of aircraft are urgently needed to cover the German withdrawal on the Eastern Front, Goering is obliged to keep equally

large numbers standing by to meet the present menace of attack by Allied aircraft based in Britain. Not only that he is also obliged to send them into action and incur losses, which in turn dwindle his reserves. This threat from the West has become progressively greater since June 1941. Goering realised at a very early stage the danger of the *Luftwaffe* becoming a wasting asset and he instructed his fighter squadrons not to challenge British fighter sweeps over Northern France. The German fighter loss rate in the West was cut by 90 per cent in the six months of the Russian campaign.

But more recently a new factor has come into play. The Americans are sending four-engined bombers over Germany and occupied territory in daylight. These provide a bait which Goering dare not ignore. He has been forced to send his fighters into the air and consequently he has again to risk heavy fighter losses in the West. He lost 53 fighters for certain over Lille on October 9, 1942, 25 over Rouen on December 12, 44 over Romilly-Sur-Seine on December 20, 22 over Wilhelmshaven on January 27, 1943, and 25 over Northwest Germany on February 4. These five American raids cost the Germans more fighters than they lost in meeting all attacks on the Western Front in the last three months of 1941.

BRAZILIAN AIRFIELD HELPS TO WIN WAR IN NORTH AFRICA.

Mr. J. Alan Coogan.

An airfield in Natal (Brazil), one of the most important and least known in the world, is the source of the air punch which enabled the British Eighth Army to drive Axis forces out of Egypt and Libya.

The busiest trans-ocean airfield in the world, it has been developed since last June by Americans. The Air Transport Command of the U. S. Army carries out with speed and precision the gigantic task for which the field is a nerve centre—getting American-made war planes to the front, and maintaining speedy transport for Allied leaders shuttling across the Atlantic on war business.

Sharing the field with the Army is the U. S. Navy and the Brazilian Air Force, the latter two co-operating closely in guarding the vital field and coastline from enemy attack by sea or air.

The field is a military cross roads where 24 hours daily, seven days a week, members of the fighting forces and officials of all the United Nations pass, on the business of defeating Germany, Japan and Italy.

Flying Fortresses, Liberators, Mitchells, Marauders, Venturas, Bostons, Hudsons, Marylands—and other planes as yet unknown to the public—take off every few minutes for Africa.

The number of warplanes which makes this crossing is a military secret, but even the enemy must know that they are numbered in many thousands by now.

The huge field is criss-crossed with wide asphalt runways built on hard-packed sand, and quickly absorbs even the hardest rains. The operations building with a control tower at the top is on one side. The Navay layout is on another side of the field. And the Brazilian air headquarters has a third side.

WILLING TO WOUND BUT AFRAID TO STRIKE

JAPAN'S ATTITUDE TO RUSSIA.

(*The Manchester Guardian.*)

Of her 100 divisions, Japan has only 25 in the South-West Pacific. Thirty-three are on the Russian frontier or in Korea, and 32 (though not of the best quality) are in China. To put it the other way round, Russian forces on the frontier are so formidable that they have to be counterbalanced by 33 divisions and Chiang Kai-Shek's troops, though ill-equipped, still pin down 32. Japan's aircraft production is small and her air force is being steadily reduced; five divisions have been brought down to four, and here again one quarter of the total is in Manchuria and one-eighth in China.

From these facts the inference may be drawn that Japan's vulnerable points are three: her merchant shipping, which has already suffered heavily in the South-West Pacific; her aircraft; and her position in China. When she begins to be hardpressed by the United Nations in China, the paper proceeds, she will need to withdraw troops from the Russian frontier. Hitler, being in the same position in 1941, attacked Russia to free his hands, but the sequel is not encouraging for the Japanese. They cannot, however, denude the frontier. It will be a dilemma.

DEFEATING JAPAN VIA THE BURMA ROAD.

(*Lieutenant General Sir Douglas Brownrigg*).

In his statement in the House of Commons on February 11, Mr. Churchill said: "We have made no secret of the fact that British and American strategists and leaders are unanimous in adhering to their decision of a year ago, namely, the defeat of Hitler, and the breaking of the German power must have priority over the decisive phase of war against Japan."

This makes the recent successes of American and Australian forces under General Mac Arthur all the more heartening. Japan had all the advantages conferred on a treacherous aggressor acting on interior lines; yet she has been quite unable to increase her opening successes, despite the fact that on their own admission her enemies can as yet only devote a small portion of their strength against her.

I am not trying to minimise the greatness of the Japanese military successes, but it seems to me that if Japan with everything in her favour was unable to invade either Australia or India, the chances of her doing so now are gone for ever.

Far from advancing any further, the Japanese have already been pushed out of some of their initial gains. Papua is now clear and the Japanese admit evacuating the whole of Guadalcanar after incurring losses which the Americans estimate at no less than 50,000 men, 71 ships and 1,000 planes.

What has led to this confession of failure? It is certainly not because the Japanese are afraid of human losses. Their man-power is very great and the Japanese do not fear to die. This retreat is rather a confession of material shortage. Japan has not the power to make good her own losses in ships and planes and she dare not continue the process of attrition by which she would continue to lose ships and aircraft at a rate greatly in excess of her powers of replacement. She is obliged to loosen her grip on the forward positions which she can no longer afford to hold and is thereby forced to give up the springboard of further southward extension.

There is yet another factor. China is still a menace to her peace of mind, and the only way to keep China innocuous is to prevent Allied supplies from reaching her. Japan must, therefore, ensure that there is no re-opening of the Burma Road—on this Churchill is equally definite. He said: "Our Asiatic war effort is confined to operations to clear Burma and open the Burma Road to give what aid can be given to the Chinese."

It is not unreasonable to suppose that General Tojo has appreciated the situation on the same lines as Churchill. He knows that the Burma Road is much more important to the future of Japan than any further southward extension; he just holds in his horns in one direction in order to have the strength to use them in another.

Japan's opening victories must have surprised even the most optimistic of the Mikado's leaders; but strategically, these victories became liabilities unless their opponent's will to go on fighting was speedily overcome. That, however, did not happen. Not only was the will to win strengthened by the treachery which had ushered in Japan's early successes—but the resources of the United Nations have proved sufficient to prevent the tidal wave of Japanese aggression from covering any more territory.

Now, at last, one of Japan's advanced bases has been recaptured thus preparing the way for further inroads. Rabaul may be the next place to go. But I do not personally believe that Japanese captures will be redeemed by reversing the process by which they were secured. Mr. Churchill's statement implies that the recovery of the Far East will commence by way of the Burma Road. Once China has been nourished, there may be a shorter way to Japan by land than ever there can be by sea.

All this is mere speculation; but the basic fact stands out that even when Germany was having things very much her own way in Europe, the Japanese were unable to increase their gains in the Far East or even to have the better of the various encounters they had with their enemies by land or sea or air. And—just when the United Nations are having their greatest successes against the Germans in Europe—the Japanese are surrendering some of their early gains to such forces as the United Nations have been able to spare in the Far Eastern theatre which, it was decided at the Casablanca Conference, must take the second place in importance until the German Reich has been subdued.........

In the circumstances simultaneous success in the East and the West is more than the United Leaders can have dared to hope for.

TOKYO AND BANGKOK.

(*Far East News Letter*, *February 11.*)

Of all the countries where the Rising Sun at present flies, Siam is in many respects the one to which the least oppressive measures are applied. She still maintains diplomatic relations with Japan and despite the fact that she is obliged to accord hospitality to Japanese troops, negotiates with the Japanese through the ordinary diplomatic channels. That is to say, unlike the countries occupied outright, Siam continues to play with some skill the charade of independence. As long as the present situation lasts the Japanese will exploit it fully in the propaganda field. They relish the opportunity to refer smugly to the "whole-hearted co-operation" of their "ally". The unwary might even be deceived by such phrases into supposing that, weak as she is, Siam has of her own free choice thrown in her lot with the Axis in general and Japan in particular. The reason for Japan's tolerance of the present pretence is simply that Japan can, in the existing circumstances, get all the material help out of Siam that she needs, in addition to the kudos for respecting Siam's independence. If circumstances change, the Japanese will, of course, not hesitate for an instant to stiffen their attitude. The exchange of complimentary calls between diplomats and congratulatory messages between Prime Ministers, together with all the frills of diplomacy, will then be dropped forthwith. The Japanese Ambassador in Bangkok will be replaced by a military Governor-General, and the last vestiges of Siam's long cherished autonomy will evaporate.

Meanwhile, however, Siam gets away with the expression of views not always consonant with Japan's. Ever an astute negotiator—long experience as a small buffer state has perfected her diplomacy—she appears to retain a few bargaining counters with which to check Japanese extortion. Japan's unwillingness to assume total control is sufficiently pronounced for her to find it worthwhile to give in to the Siamese Government on at least minor issues.

Japan's enthusiasms are not by any means shared by Siam. As might be expected, this is generally the case where the relations between the two countries are concerned. There have been some striking instances where Japan has called the tune without evoking any response from Siam. At the time of the recent serious floods, the Japanese gave wide publicity to their own munificence towards the victims, but the Siamese remained apparently unimpressed. At all events they accepted the "help" calmly and without effusive comment. In cultural matters especially the Japanese have made a point of emphasising their rapprochement with Siam, giving great prominence to events like the ratification of the Siam-Japan Cultural Pact in December. No official notice appears, however, to be taken of such empty gestures by the Siamese administration.

The most striking instance, however, of the divergence between Japan's and Siam's notions of news values is to be found in their respective treatment of the anniversary of Siam's declaration of war on Great Britain and the United States. For Tokyo this was a magnificent opportunity for propaganda, rather of the wish-fulfilment variety. Tokyo devoted its energies and propaganda machine to an extensive and intensive campaign in every language and from every transmitter, on the assumption that the daily reiteration of improving relations between the two countries would in fact make them better and better. By contrast, on the occasion in question, Marshal Pibul, the Siamese Premier, was inspecting military establishments in the provinces, having perhaps arranged his trip to coincide with the anniversary, so that his absence from the capital would justify the lack of any official statement. Finally, General Tojo's speech in the Diet on 28th January provoked little or no reaction from Siam, although his references to that country might almost be described as fulsome.

What is the conclusion to be drawn from all this? The Siamese Government is clearly obliged to steer a tricky course between Japanese pressure and public opinion at home. The above evidence would seem to indicate that that is little less restless than public opinion among the Nazi puppet states in Europe; that Siam has by no means wholeheartedly accepted Japan's New Order, and looks forward to the day when, with Japan defeated, she may again enjoy full national independence.

THE MIDDLE EAST SUPPLY CENTRE.

(B. B. C. Broadcast).

I want to tell you why, in the middle of a great war, we have to concern ourselves with, say, the making of jute bags in Egypt, the starting of a points-rationing scheme in Palestine—and an advanced one at that—and the fighting of locusts in the Middle East generally.

For reasons which you know, the Middle East has become an area of great military importance, and by the Middle East I mean the countries in the

Eastern Mediterranean, through Syria, Palestine and Egypt southwards to Aden and Abyssinia, and across to Iraq and Persia in the East. These countries in the early part of 1941 found themselves three times as far from their sources of supply as they were in normal times. Why? Europe was cut off by the war and the Mediterranean could no longer be used for ordinary commercial traffic. All goods from Britain and from the United States had to take the long route round the Cape, and that is much the same thing as going half-way round the world. You will, of course, see at once that to carry goods all that way requires many more ships than on a shorter voyage, since the quantity of cargo a ship can deliver depends not only on the size of the ship but on the length of the voyage.

We had then this large area, with practically no shipping resources of its own, situated 12,000 or 13,000 route miles from its sources of supply. Sources of supply—a bit of our jargon, but it just means where people get things from. This great shipping problem then explains why the Ministry of shipping or, as it now is, the Ministry of War Transport, had to set about planning the job of supplying the Middle East.

MIDDLE EAST SUPPLY CENTRE.

Why, you may well ask, should we, the British people, feel obliged to supply this area with all the necessaries of life? The answer is that the countries concerned are all helping the Allies and we in turn are helping them. Also, we have armies in the area. The people round them need feeding and supplying and we do that as a matter of course. Our enemies drain their neighbours of everything they possess and reduce them to a state of misery and starvation. That is not our way.

So we set to work to plan supplies for more than a dozen countries with varying needs, varying degrees of self-sufficiency, and varying forms of Government. Much of the planning in the early days had to be done from London, but we soon saw that an organization on the spot was necessary if the work was to be properly done. We therefore created it, and bestowed on the infant the unromantic, uninspiring, but not inappropriate name of Middle East Supply Centre.

Its home is Cairo, and it has two main jobs. First, to make the area as nearly as possible self-sufficient; and second to make sure that when goods have to be imported from outside they are the right goods and only the goods really needed; what's more, to make sure that they are brought from the sources most convenient from the point of view of shipping. You might think that the best source from which to draw supplies from a shipping point of view is the one nearest the point of consumption. This is usually true, but not always. Take a simple example: suppose lorries have to be brought from the United States, and steel is also needed from some source or other. Steel is heavy, with little bulk, and lorries are bulky with little weight. The ship has to bring lorries anyway—so it may as well bring the steel too, even though the

steel has to come 12,000 miles from the United States. Some nearer source even perhaps only 1,000 miles away, would require the use of an extra ship This is a simple illustration—much more simple, I'm sorry to say, than the problems that confront us in real life—but it shows that we cannot rely on rule of thumb.

AGRICULTURAL POLICY.

But I must get back to our first aim; that is, to produce as much as we can within the area. This has meant producing wheat, barley and other food-crops instead of, for example, cotton. To change the direction of agricultural policy isn't easy in any country, as we ourselves know, and it is particularly difficult in countries whose farmers are mainly peasant cultivators. In Egypt the average farmer cultivates less than an acre of land, and there the cotton acreage has been reduced to one-third of its pre-war size and the country has increased its production of cereals: a great achievement.

But crops have to be protected as well as grown. In that area, as we remember from the Old Testament, the locust is an enemy which has devastated vast areas and led to the starvation of great populations. Locusts are no respecters of man-made boundaries. They may breed in the summer in North-West India; may move into Persia following the rains; and may spread from there into Arabia, Egypt and East Africa. So plans for their destruction have to be centralized, and the Middle East Supply Centre has, as one of its sections, an Anti-Locust organization which can follow the pests round from country to country, or plan a warm reception for them at their next stopping place—spray them with poison from airplanes or drive them into trenches and burn them, and generally make their life as burdensome and precarious as possible wherever they may be found. Incidentally, Russian, Indian, Persian, Arab and other experts are working with us as part of one team to beat the locusts. This is only one example of the highly developed scientific and technical work of the Centre.

All these activities are aimed at increasing the production of each country, but supply has to be planned for the area as one unit, so exchanges have to be arranged—barley from one country against wheat from another, and so on. This means changing the normal channels of trade, and that is not so easy as it sounds. In some of the more backward places the job of the inspector who arrives to ask the local farmer what his stocks are is not one to be sought after. He needs not only quickness of mind, but often fleetness of foot if he is to return bearing his information with him. In spite of all the difficulties, however, the Middle East Supply Centre does manage to get a pretty good idea of the needs and of the production of all the countries in its care.

PROGRAMME OF IMPORTS.

The Centre when it has totted these up, and has struck the balance which remains to be found from outside the area, has next to produce a comprehensive programme of imports months in advance, because it will be months after the

goods are ordered before they arrive. Over the last twelve months, imports into the area have been counted not in hundreds or thousands, but in hundreds of thousands of tons. This is partly because of the serious crop failure in this area in 1941—a failure which threw a great strain on the resources of the Centre and on our shipping. It was not only that we had to find and move great quantities of cereals, we had to contend with the fact that the confidence of the people had been shaken, and this increased the tendency to hoard and to conceal foodstuffs which is always present in unsettled times. One area was short of wheat and could not export its currants: it had to resort to compulsory currant bread—another kind of national loaf.

This reminds me of a still greater problem with which we are all familiar enough—the restriction of consumption of unnecessary goods and the fair distribution of those goods that are necessary. Rationing is possible in Palestine, for example, but that solution cannot be applied to a nomadic population such as the Bedouin Arabs who may be here to-day and a hundred miles away next month. So each case must be dealt with on its merits.

U. S. REPRESENTATIVE.

Recently we have been greatly heartened and helped by the action of the United States Government in sending out to join the Centre Mr. Frederick Winant, the brother of the United States Ambassador in Britain. The American Army is also represented by General Maxwell. Many of the supplies to the Middle East come from the United States, and it is therefore appropriate as well as helpful, that our Allies should be closely associated with us in this great work.

Since its establishment, a War Cabinet Minister has arrived in the Middle East—the Minister of State. First we had Mr. Oliver Lyttleton, now Mr. R. G. Casey. As you can imagine, it makes all the difference to have a Minister on the spot to guide day-to-day policy and to give authoritative advice whenever required.

But I'd almost forgotten to say that the Middle East Supply Centre does not cater exclusively for the civil population: it deals also with some of the supplies for our Army, particularly bulk foodstuffs, and on its staff are soldiers as well as civilians. I have not said, either, that the Centre is a policy-making body and does planning only; it does not buy or sell, store or otherwise handle the goods. These commercial functions are performed by other organizations, the bulk being done by the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation.

VITAL IMPORTANCE OF THE CENTRE.

This, then, is a very rapid and incomplete sketch of what has grown to be a great undertaking. On its success hangs the well-being of a vast area and many millions of people: on its efficiency hangs the extent to which we can save ships for use in the direct task of hastening our victory. The countries concerned are all helping the Allies and we in our turn are helping them.

But, left to themselves, these countries would be unable, in a world of shortages, to obtain the wherewithal to live. The Middle East Supply Centre, so to speak, champions their needs and sifts their requirements. It is the instrument through which we do what we regard as our duty to people—eighty millions of them—who, through force of circumstances, have come to need our help. Its success means that our sons and brothers in the Forces can carry on with clear consciences and safe from the hatred and contempt which, because our enemies loot and destroy instead of supplying, follow their armies wherever they may go.

THE PERSIA-IRAQ ARMY.

(*The Times*).

With the Eighth Army pressing on to Tripoli and the main attention focussed on the western flank of the Middle East, there has been a tendency to forget that there is also an impressive British army on the eastern side of this widespread theatre of war.

Under the command of General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, the Persia and Iraq Command—P. I. Force to be irreverent—has been gradually built up since its formation in the critical days last August. At that time, Rommel's army was pressing on the Alamein line, threatening Egypt; so it was necessary to denude the Ninth Army in Syria and the Tenth in Palestine of the greater part of their personnel and equipment to reinforce General Auchinleck's army. As at the same time the Germans were driving down through the Caucasus, there was also a grave threat to the important oilfields of southern Persia. To meet this and also to relieve the Commander-in-Chief of the Middle East of the necessity of giving his attention to two widely separate fronts, the P. I. Force came into being as a separate Command.

TWO TASKS.

Progress since those days has been immense, according to Major-General Baillon, Chief of the General Staff, P. I. Force. In addition to the reinforced Tenth Army there is now a large and powerful Polish Army and the complicated administrative problem which the assembly and the maintenance of this force produced has been successfully solved.

The tasks of the P. I. Force fall into two sections: first, to assure the defence of the Persian oilfields from land or air attack; secondly, to develop to the maximum the use of routes for the delivery of aid to Russia.

For some time, while the German threat from the Caucasus remained, priority had to be given to the job of building up the force and the construction, with very limited facilities, of necessary lines of communication, and this embraced the construction or the extension of roads, docks, railways, depôts and so forth.

The advance of the Germans slowed down and every week that they failed to reach Baku gave General Wilson more time to build up his force until now,

with the Germans in retreat, not only is the P. I. Force strong but the ground work has been successfully accomplished and priority is now given to aid to Russia.

LONG-TERM PLAN.

"The brilliant Russian successes," said General Baillon, "have put back the enemy's immediate threat by some months and may have finally dispelled it, but, in any case, the breathing space has enabled a long-term comprehensive plan to be perfected in place of the compromise improvisation which at first appeared necessary.

"There is also wholehearted co-operation from the Iraqis, which has now reached the extent of formal declaration of war against the Axis. A small but efficient Iraqi Army is training with the P. I. Force and is proving itself well-fitted for operations in the hills and mountains of Iraq.

"We have in the P. I. Force a first-class fighting army," added General Baillon "it is now required to defend Persia and Iraq and it will be available to fight somewhere else."

PUDUKKOTTAI STATE NATIONAL WAR FRONT BUREAU.

PROGRAMME.

LECTURE CXXXVI. (*Batch 1*)

6- 3-43	Municipal Office.	6.00 p.m.	10-3-43	Rani's High School.	10.15 a.m.
7- 3-43	Puvarasakudi ...	7.00 „	„	College B Tamil.	10.15 „
„	Venkatakulam ...	7.30 „	„	Mirattunilai ...	7.00 p.m.
8- 3-43	Perungalur ...	7.00 „	„	Arimalam ...	7.30 „
„	Adanakkottai ...	7.30 „	11- 3-43	Poongudi ...	7.00 „
9- 3-43	Kiranur ...	7.00 „	„	Satyamangalam...	7.30 „
„	Nanjur ...	7.30 „	12- 3-43	Udayalippatti ...	7.00 „
10- 3-43	C. S. M. High School.	10.00 a.m.	„	Killukottai ...	7.30 „

LECTURE CXXXVII. (*Batch 2.*)

13- 3-43	Municipal Office.	6.00 p.m.	17- 3-43	Kodumbalur ...	7.00 p.m.
14- 3-43	Kudumiyamalai ..	7.00 „	„	Viralimalai ...	7.30 „
„	Parambur ...	7.30 „	18- 3-43	Kalamavur ...	7.00 „
15- 3-43	Vengalur ...	7.00 „	„	Nallur ...	7.30 „
„	Konapattu ...	7.30 „	19- 3-43	Panayappatti ...	7.00 „
16- 3-43	Nachchandupatti.	7.00 „	„	Rangiyam ...	7.30 „
„	Virachchilai ...	7.30 „			

RECRUITING—ADVERTISEMENT—4 p. m.

6—3—43	Tirumayyam.	13—3—43	Ponnamaravathi.
7—3—43	Marudankonviduthi.	14—3—43	Embal.
8—3—43	Mullangurichchi.	15—3—43	Konnaiyur.
9—3—43	Konapattu.	16—3—43	Ramachandrapuram.
10—3—43	Kilanilai-Puduppatti.	17—3—43	Karambakkudi.
11—3—43	Alângudi.	18—3—43	Kilanilai.
12—3—43	Pappapatti.	19—3—43	Pudukkottai.

Sri Brihadamba State Press, Pudukkottai. 750—7-3-43.